

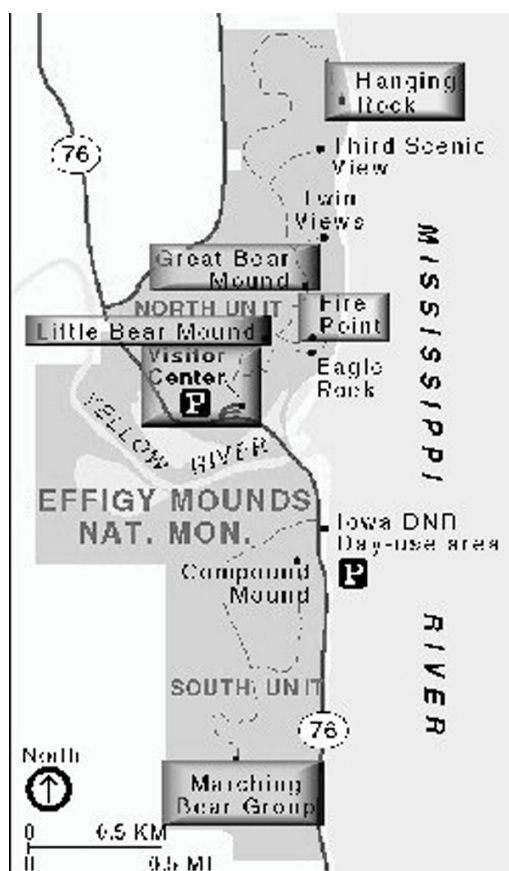
# Report

## Effigy Mounds National Monument

### ■ 1.0 Site Description

Effigy Mounds National Monument, located along the banks of the Mississippi River in northeastern Iowa, was established in 1949 by presidential proclamation to preserve and protect outstanding examples of Prehistoric American Indian Mound Building culture. The site consists of 1,481 acres of forests, tall grass prairie, wetlands, and rivers. The confluence of the Yellow River and the Mississippi River are located within the Park. The town of Marquette, Iowa is located three miles south of the Park.

Effigy Mounds National Monument consists of a visitor center with parking lot and an extensive trail system. The Park itself is bisected by Highway 76 and the Yellow River. There are approximately seven miles of trails on the north side of the Yellow River and six miles of trails on the south side of the Yellow River.



Visitor access to the north side of the Park is gained through the visitor's center. The visitor center has approximately 45 parking stalls and three bus stalls. From the visitor's center, the extensive trail system takes you to various mounds and effigies including the Great Bear Mound and Fire Point.

The south section of the Park is accessed from a six stall Iowa Department of Natural Resources parking lot located along Highway 76. Visitors must park in this lot and then cross the roadway and bridge to access the south side of the Park, creating dangerous situations. In addition, rangers have to unlock a gate to let handicapped users through to the accessible trails and then relock the gates when the visitors leave.

## ■ 2.0 Existing ATS

At present there is no alternative transportation usage in Effigy Mounds, but there are several alternative transportation solutions on the horizon. With the completion of a new General Management Plan, there has been a need identified for the improvement of access to the side of the Park. A tunnel underneath Highway 76 and a boardwalk across the Yellow River for pedestrians is planned. This will eliminate some of the danger at this area. The tunnel is planned for construction within the next year with the boardwalk following soon after.

In addition, there are plans in the gateway communities of Marquette and McGregor for the "Trail of Two Cities," a bicycle trail along the Mississippi River connecting the two cities. It is hoped to not only connect the two towns, but to run the bicycle trail north along the Mississippi to the mouth of the Yellow River, where the Effigy Mounds Visitor Center is located.

## ■ 3.0 ATS Needs

ATS needs identified include:

- Providing handicap access to the south side of Effigy Mounds without having to enter the site through the "back door." This might be done by rebuilding the entrance to the south side of the Park for handicapped accessibility (addressed in the new General Management Plan).
- Rebuilding the south entrance of Effigy Mounds to alleviate dangerous highway and bridge crossings and poor sightlines through the use of a pedestrian tunnel and boardwalk system (addressed in the new General Management Plan).
- Providing shuttle service from gateway communities during peak weekend visitation to alleviate congestion in the visitor center parking lot. At present, the visitor center parking lot is overloaded during peak weekends and overflow parking is provided in

the maintenance yard of the Park. When the maintenance yard lot fills up, visitors park along Highway 76, creating a dangerous situation. Providing shuttles from town may take away some of the parking demand during peak events.

- The addition of river access may provide opportunity for riverboat users and recreational boaters to access Effigy Mounds. Currently, riverboats dock across the river at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. From there visitors are privately shuttled the seven miles by road via private bus to Effigy Mounds.

## ■ 4.0 Basis of ATS Needs

The additional alternative transportation services proposed would have the following benefits for Effigy Mounds National Monument:

- Relief of congestion and a safer user experience is a major benefit of alternative transportation. By relieving congestion at peak-use times, dangerous overflow parking along Highway 76 is not needed. In addition, rebuilding the south section entrance of the park separates pedestrians and vehicles, taking visitors off the highway and roadway.
- The opportunity for visitors to arrive at Effigy Mounds via alternative means of transportation is a benefit for the park. A proposed bicycle trail from the gateway towns of McGregor and Marquette will provide safe travel for cyclists to Effigy Mounds. Expanded river access would allow riverboat visitors and recreational users to arrive at the park.

## ■ 5.0 Bibliography

Effigy Mounds National Monument. Internet site: <http://www.nps.gov/emnm/>. Information printed November 4, 1999.

## ■ 6.0 Persons Interviewed

Kathleen Miller, Superintendent, telephone interview, November 8, 1999